

Running head: Working in a DIBELS System

Chapter 3

If You Are Working In A DIBELS System, This Chapter is For You

If you are working in a DIBELS system, then at a minimum all of your students are being assessed for early literacy skills three times a year using the DIBELS measures. For many schools this means that three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) a district team of DIBELers comes into your school and pulls your students across the day until the last one has been assessed. After that, it's possible that you never hear another word and are left to wonder what that was all about. If this sounds like your system don't be discouraged. You are not alone and it is easily fixed. Monitoring students three times a year is a good first step toward establishing a solid DIBELS system. After reading this chapter you will be better able to advocate for access to your students' scores because you will understand the power of this data to help you help all your students become readers.

What are DIBELS measures? They are 1 minute measures of early literacy skills that can be used to gauge how 'on track' a student is for becoming a reader in elementary school. The types of early literacy skills that are being assessed are phonemic awareness (can a child hear, blend, and segment the sounds in words?), alphabetic principal or phonics (can a child see the symbol we call 'b' and know that it says the sound 'buh'?), and fluency. This chapter will not go into detail about the measures or other DIBELS specific information. Rather, it will be assumed that you are interested in this chapter because you teach reading and know that your students are being assessed three times per year with these measures. This chapter is intended to be a practical guide in how to access the information that is available to you once those student scores have been entered into the DIBELS data base at the University of Oregon.

When your students get DIBELed three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring this is know as 'benchmarking'. The data from the benchmarking is entered into the DIBELS data base and there it will sit until someone wants to take a look at it. Generally speaking, the people who have access are the district stakeholders such as the director of curriculum, the director of special services, and the district superintendent. There is a good chance that your principal also knows how to access the data, but a surprising number do not. What you may not know is that you also have access to it. All you need to have is a username and password which you can probably get from your principal and certainly get from your district DIBELS person. After you get the log in information then you will be ready to pull up your data and see how your students are doing.

Logging onto the site the easy way

1. Google for DIBELS
2. Select Official DIBELS Home Page
3. Click on Data System
4. On the right side of the page you will need to enter your username and password
5. Once you are logged in you will see a menu of options on the left

Now you are ready to use the powerful graphing features of the DIBELS website. This will let you easily monitor your students' early literacy skill acquisition and also follow how effective your instruction is in getting them from where they are to where they need to be by the end of the year. A good place to start is the View/Create Reports menu. From here you will be able to find your class lists, individual performance profiles, and class progress graphs.

Generating Reports

1. Click on View/Create Reports
2. Look at lower half of screen where it says Web Reports for Viewing Online
3. Look for Class Reports
4. Select Class List Report
5. Choose the assessment period - which benchmark do you want to look at? If it is the fall then you only have data for the fall. However, if it's the spring you will have three different sets of data (fall, winter, and spring). Make sure you select the one that you are interested in.
6. This will take you to a grid like the one on the next page that will enable you to look at your students and their DIBELS scores. You will see the student name, their scores on the DIBELS measures, and in the far right column you will see *Instructional Recommendation*. Instructional Recommendations come in three levels (and corresponding colors). Level 1 is Low Risk / Benchmark which tells us that the student is at grade level and on track for becoming a reader. We like to think of this level as green or "good to go". Level 2 is known as Some Risk/ Strategic – and additional intervention is recommended. Level 2 is often thought of as being yellow or "caution". Level 3 is At Risk / Intensive – needs substantial intervention. We think of level 3 as being red as in "red alert!– something MUST be done".

Here's an example of a partial fourth grade Class List Report:

Name	Oral Reading Fluency			Instructional Recommendation
	Score	Percentile	Status	
Jennie	63	10	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
Jasmine	72	15	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
Alyssa	83	21	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
Dylan	88	24	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
Richard	105	39	Some Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
Heather	106	40	Some Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
Tyler	107	41	Some Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
Austin	119	54	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Cody	122	57	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Aaron	130	64	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Brendan	131	65	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Brandon	135	69	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Emma	139	73	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
Isaac	141	74	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level

If you are teaching students who are in third grade or higher, you will see that your students are ordered from lowest scores (Intensive) to highest scores (Benchmark). This is done in order to place emphasis on the most At-Risk students as they are the most in need of attention. If your students are in K-2, you will see that there may be more than one DIBELS score for each student and that there are still only three instructional recommendations given (benchmark, strategic, and intensive). The reason for this is that in K-2 there are more measures used than just oral reading fluency which is what is used from third grade on. For K-2 the computer program that is keeping all of the data and generating the reports takes into consideration the scores on the different measures and weights each one according to importance for that grade and benchmark period. From this, one instructional recommendation is given and you should let the instructional recommendation be your primary guide. Another feature for the lower grades is that students are grouped not only from lowest to highest but also grouped by the similarity of their scores on the individual measures. This may aid you when you start grouping your students by skill acquisition.

Important point: no matter where they are on the list, make sure you use the Instructional Recommendation as your *primary* guide in identifying students for intervention groups.

Another very useful report that you can easily generate and print (it's very handy to have during parent/teacher conferences) is the Individual Student Performance Profile. Here's how to find it:

1. Once you are logged in, go to the left hand menu and click on View/Create Reports

2. Roughly in the middle of your screen in the white area you will see [Individual Student Reports](#)
3. Just beneath that click on [Individual Student Performance Profiles](#)
4. Choose your class and click on [Download report here](#)
5. This will pull up your entire class in *alphabetical* order
6. Each student will have his or her own page with a clean break before the next student
7. Each student page contains their DIBELS history from kindergarten through sixth grade
8. The grey horizontal boxes are the benchmarks or goals for the student
9. The solid black dots are the student's actual score during that assessment period
10. If you see empty black circles, those are progress monitoring data and you are ahead of the game (more about this coming up)
11. Warning... if you do plan to use these for parent/teacher conferences make sure that you can explain each of the measures in terms of the early literacy skills and also, if a child is doing poorly, be ready to describe with detail the intervention that he or she is receiving.

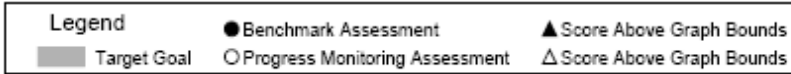
An example of this report can be seen on the following page.

Another powerful graph is the Class Progress Graph. You can use this to see at a glance how much progress your class has made from the beginning to middle to end of year benchmarks. This can be particularly helpful if you are interested in seeing how far your lowest students have come during the time that you've had them. Here's how to find it:

1. Go to [View/Create Reports](#)
2. One third of the way down in the white area you will see *Class Reports*
3. Just below that click on [Class Progress Graph](#)
4. Select your class and click on [Download Report Here](#)

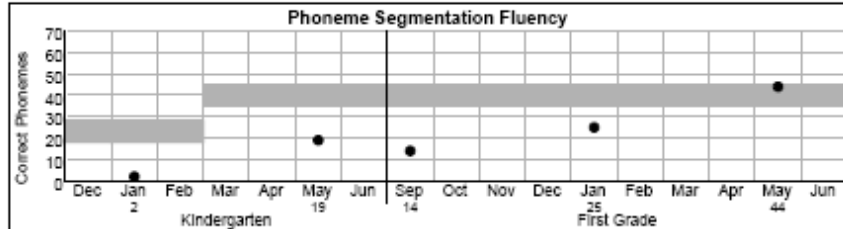
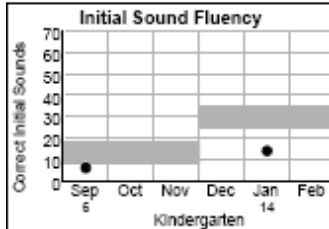
You will see your students ranked from lowest to highest on the fall benchmark scores with a black mark. If there have been subsequent benchmarks, for example if it's spring, you will see that there are also red and blue marks for winter and spring respectively.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Individual Student Performance Profile

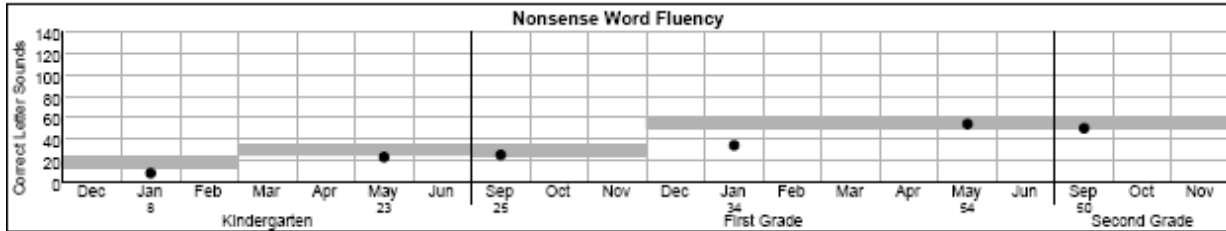


Student's Name _____
Student's School/Class _____

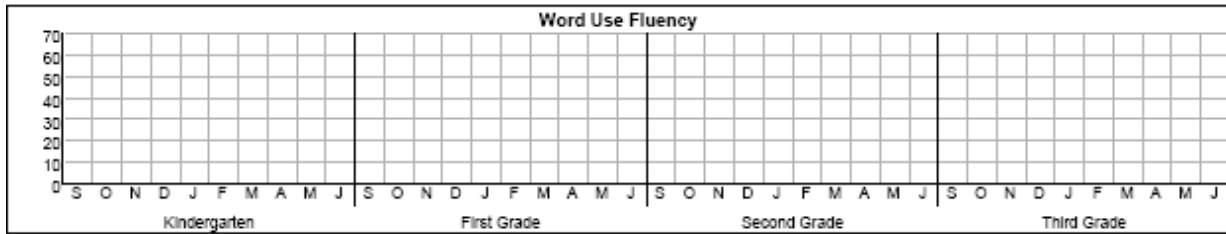
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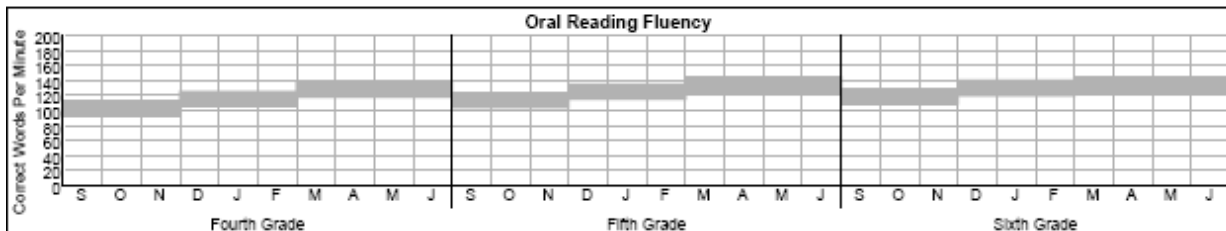
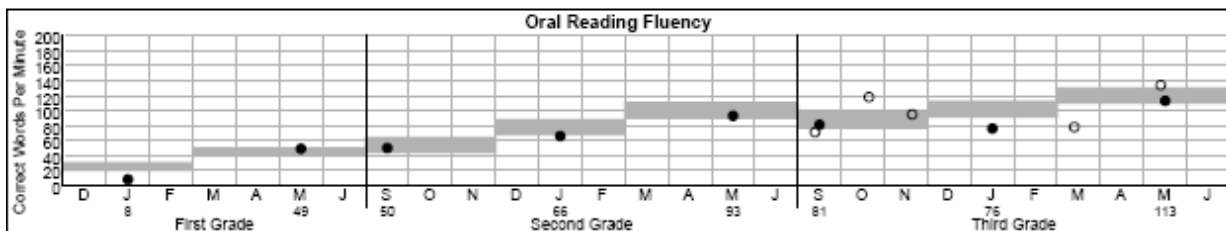
ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE



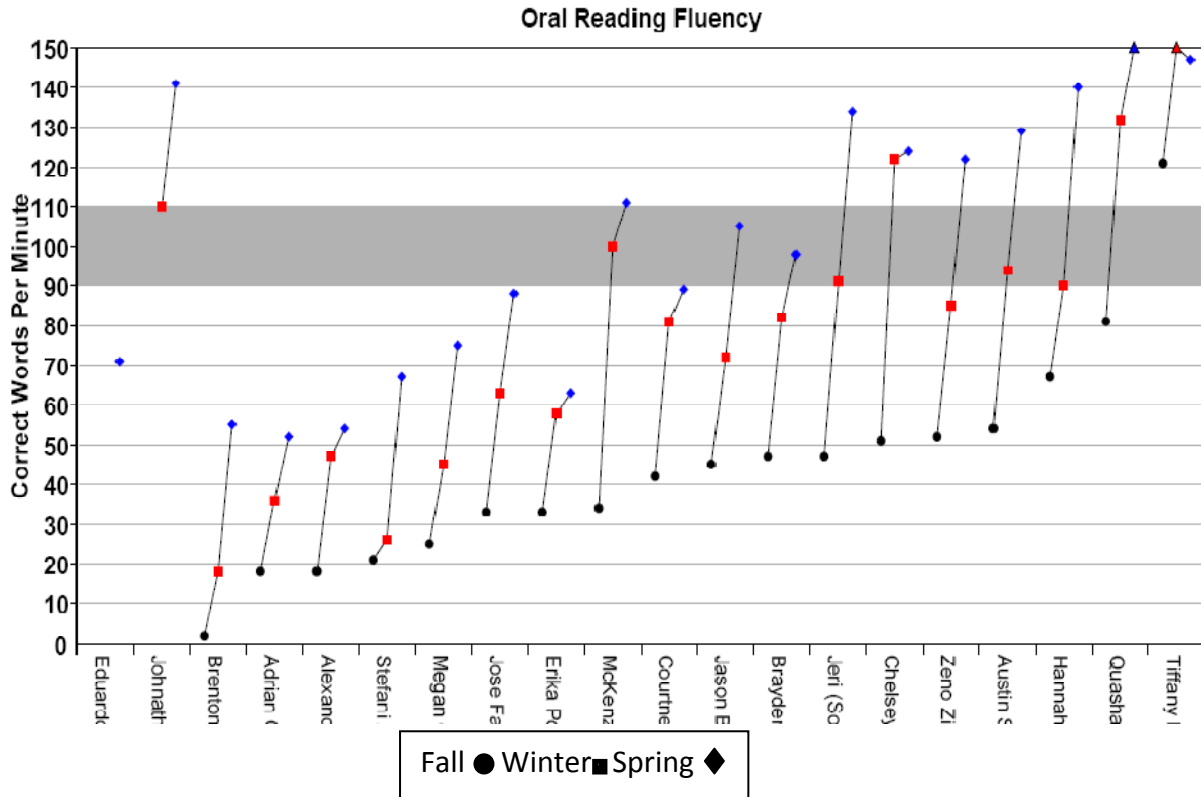
VOCABULARY AND ORAL LANGUAGE



FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION



Here's an example of a third grade year-end Class Progress Graph:



You will notice that two students on the left hand side of the graph, Eduard and Jonathan, are higher up and don't fit the pattern of the rest of the class. This is because neither Jonathan nor Eduard was assessed in the fall. Eduard has only one data point and that is for the spring benchmark. Jonathan has two data points; one for the winter and one for the spring benchmarks. Students with missing data will always appear on the far left of the graph.

So, let's review. You have now been introduced to your Class List Report, your Individual Student Performance Profile, and the Class Progress Graph. We think that these top three are the best places to start. Of course there is much more information that you can pull from the DIBELS data system, but we believe that if you are just beginning then nothing beats these three for giving you useful information in a few easy steps.

Progress Monitoring with the DIBELS data system:

You may have noticed that the information you've gotten so far all revolves around the benchmark scores. This is a good place to start but is not sufficient if you are going to monitor how well your students are doing in their intervention groups. You'll need much more frequent assessments of the students' growth in order to make instructional decisions in a timely manner. These frequent

assessments or check-ups are usually referred to as progress monitoring. Progress Monitoring is an essential part of any RtI system. Chapter 4 will go into more detail about the 'why' of progress monitoring; this chapter will cover the 'how' of progress monitoring specifically within the DIBELS data system.

I have my students in intervention groups and I want to know how well they're doing. How can I progress monitor them efficiently and store the data in such a way that it is easy for me to retrieve and interpret? Good question. Let's start with how you will gather the data. Different schools and teams handle this differently. Some teachers like to know how to give the DIBELS measures themselves so that they can collect data any time they wish and are not reliant on others to do it for them. Other teachers feel that they already have enough to do and would like to delegate this responsibility to a select group of people within the school building. Obviously this will be something that you and your team will need to decide on before you can establish a good system for progress monitoring. If you choose a select group within the building one thing to think about will be time commitment. Think about your class list. How many students do you have who are "Intensive"? If you are like many teachers you probably have 15-20% of your students in that category. This means, assuming a class of 30, that approximately 4-6 of your students should be progress monitored every week. Depending upon the grade that you teach this will take approximately 15-25 minutes. If there are 3 classes in your grade level, then you will need a person to assess for 45-75 minutes per week. Classes or groups can be assessed on different days so you can spread out that person's time. For example maybe you have a music teacher who is able to spend 30 minutes per day three days a week doing progress monitoring with your students. This would allow for 90 minutes total which in the previous scenario would be sufficient to complete all 3 grade level classes each week. Some schools ask retired teachers to help, others ask parents. There may be an Educational Assistant (EA) who has some FTE available or you could ask the school psychologist. In other words, there are many ways to approach this and it's up to you to decide what will work best given the resources that you have.

Now, if you've been paying attention (and we're sure you have) you'll be thinking to yourself, well that's great – we do have an EA who is willing to do this but how are we going to get her trained to administer and score these measures? There are several ways to go, the most obvious being to ask the

district to lend you some of the folks who normally conduct the DIBELS benchmark assessments and have them train you. Your principal may be able to arrange this and you may be able to keep cost to a minimum. However, you should keep in mind that these folks probably have not been trained as trainers and therefore won't have any of the necessary training materials. This would be the least desirable option.

A less obvious, but very effective way to acquire the skills is through a free on-line training program that was created by folks at the Florida Center for Reading Research. You can follow this link, print out the materials, and at your convenience participate in the on-line training. You do not need to schedule it. You can access it 24/7 if you wish. The URL for this training is:

<http://www.fcrr.org/assessmentScreeningProgressMonitoring.htm>

Of course if you'd like to have someone come and provide training in person, there are several very good organizations that will do that. They will also be able to help you with much of the data entry and interpretation. This is really the best way to go if your school or district has the resources, and you will find the contact information for a few of our favorite organizations in the back of this book.

So now we will fast forward and assume that you have several people who are trained to collect DIBELS progress monitoring data within your building. We will also assume that the materials have been downloaded for free from the DIBELS website (or purchased from Sopris) and made available to the data collectors. What they will do is administer the measures and record the student scores on the front of the DIBELS student booklets. After this someone needs to enter the score into the DIBELS data system. This should probably be you because it will give you a chance to become very familiar with your students' progress each week. The rest of this chapter will guide you through the mechanics of entering the scores into the DIBELS data base.

Begin by following these steps to log onto the DIBELS data system:

1. Google for DIBELS (or type in dibels.uoregon.edu)
2. Select Official DIBELS Home Page
3. Click on Data System
4. On the right side of the page you will need to enter your username and password
5. Once you are logged in you will see a menu of options on the left

6. Go to the menu on the left and click on Progress Monitoring

After you go to Progress Monitoring you should see two categories:

Progress Monitoring Data Entry

And

Progress Monitoring Reports

7. Click on Progress Monitoring Data Entry
8. If you get no students listed that means that none of your students have been identified for progress monitoring. If you do have students on there already, skip to number 10.
9. You'll need to select (add) students for progress monitoring and you will probably find that you do not have access to this function with your teacher user name and password. If this is the case then ask the person who gave you your username and password to direct you to a person who *can* select and add your students for progress monitoring. Once your students have been added, proceed to number 10.
10. Now you should be able to click on Enter/Edit Progress Monitoring Data and you will get a menu that asks you if you'd like Grade-Level Monitoring or Out-of-Grade Monitoring. Out-of-Grade Monitoring is an option for students who are so low in grade-level material that you don't expect to see much growth in that material. Therefore, the DIBELS folks have created a way for you to drop down and progress monitor in measures that are below the student's current grade level. For the purpose of getting started we will guide you through the basic Grade-Level Monitoring option.
11. Now you will be asked to choose the time of year. The system only pulls up three months at a time. Make your best guess, select it, and if it's not correct just go back and select a different time of year. This will become obvious once you try it.
12. Find the student AND find the DIBELS measures that you have scores for. Enter his or her scores in the appropriate boxes. Scroll down to see more places to enter the other measures.

Teachers of lower grades will have more options because there are more measures for those students.

13. Once you have a few students entered, you can go to the top of the page and select “Hide Tests Without Scores” to reduce the amount of scrolling and searching that you may be doing.
14. When you are finished, scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Submit Scores”
15. You have now added the students’ scores to both the progress monitoring graphs and the individual student performance profile.

On the next page you will see an example of a progress monitoring graph for one kindergarten student. You can see that this student was progress monitored on three separate measures. What do you think of their progress?

Pulling up and printing out the progress monitoring graphs is a pretty easy step. First you'll need to go to the progress monitoring section (open that file drawer!) and then click on “Student Progress Monitoring Graphs”. This should pull up all of your students who have progress monitoring data entered. You can choose to print just one or all of them. You can also see at a glance how well your interventions are working. These are really good graphs to share with your grade level team and/or the person who is running the intervention group, if it is not you. You will almost certainly find it helpful to sit down for 30 minutes a week with colleagues and discuss student progress and brainstorm about ways to continue helping all students.

The following text can go where it fits in the progress monitoring section.

**** Important concept ****

You may find it useful to think of the Progress Monitoring area of the DIBELS website as being a file drawer which holds nothing but progress monitoring information. If you want to do anything with progress monitoring, then you will need to remember to first go to that file drawer and open it. You cannot access any progress monitoring functions from anywhere else in the DIBELS data base.

Figure 1

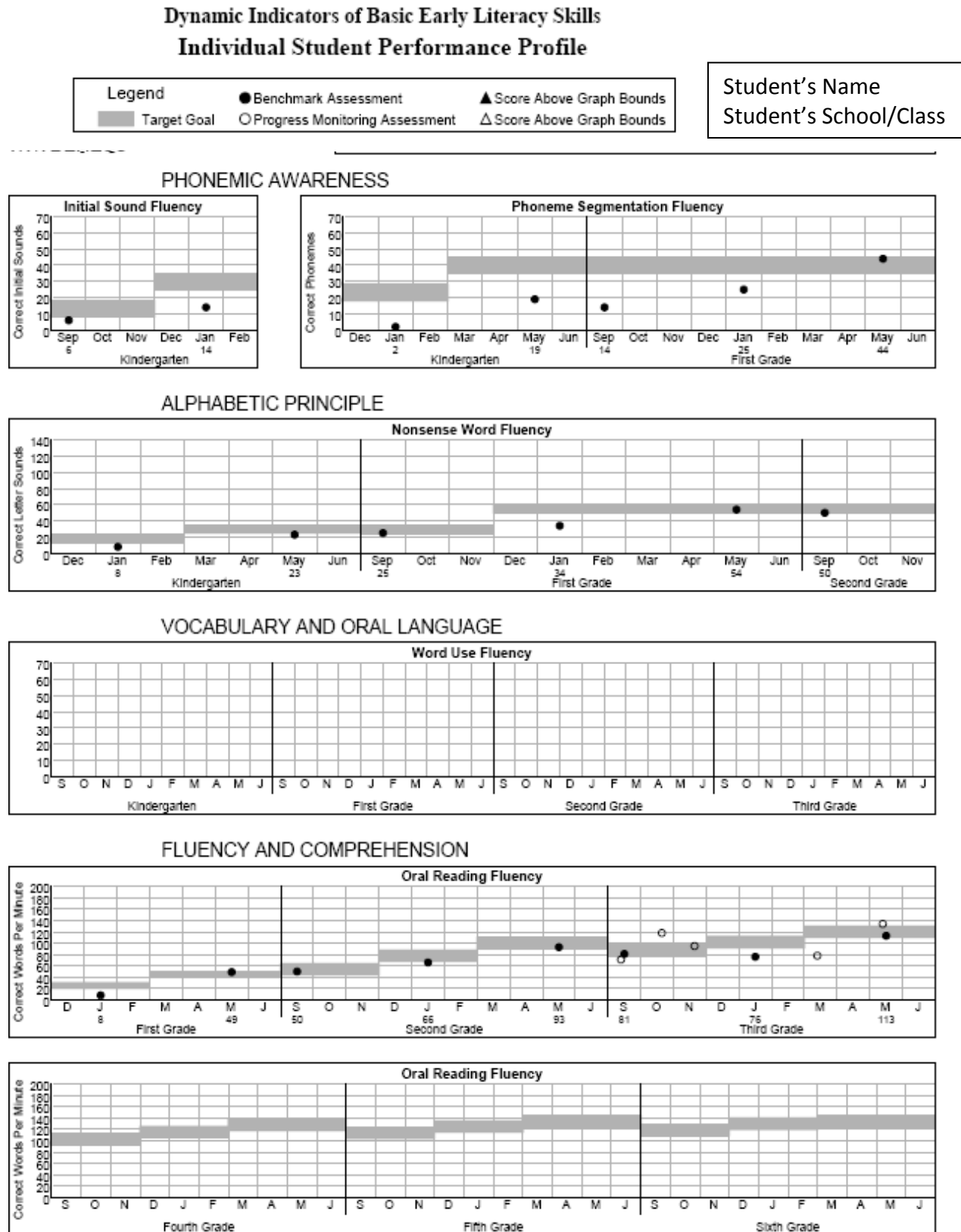


Figure 2

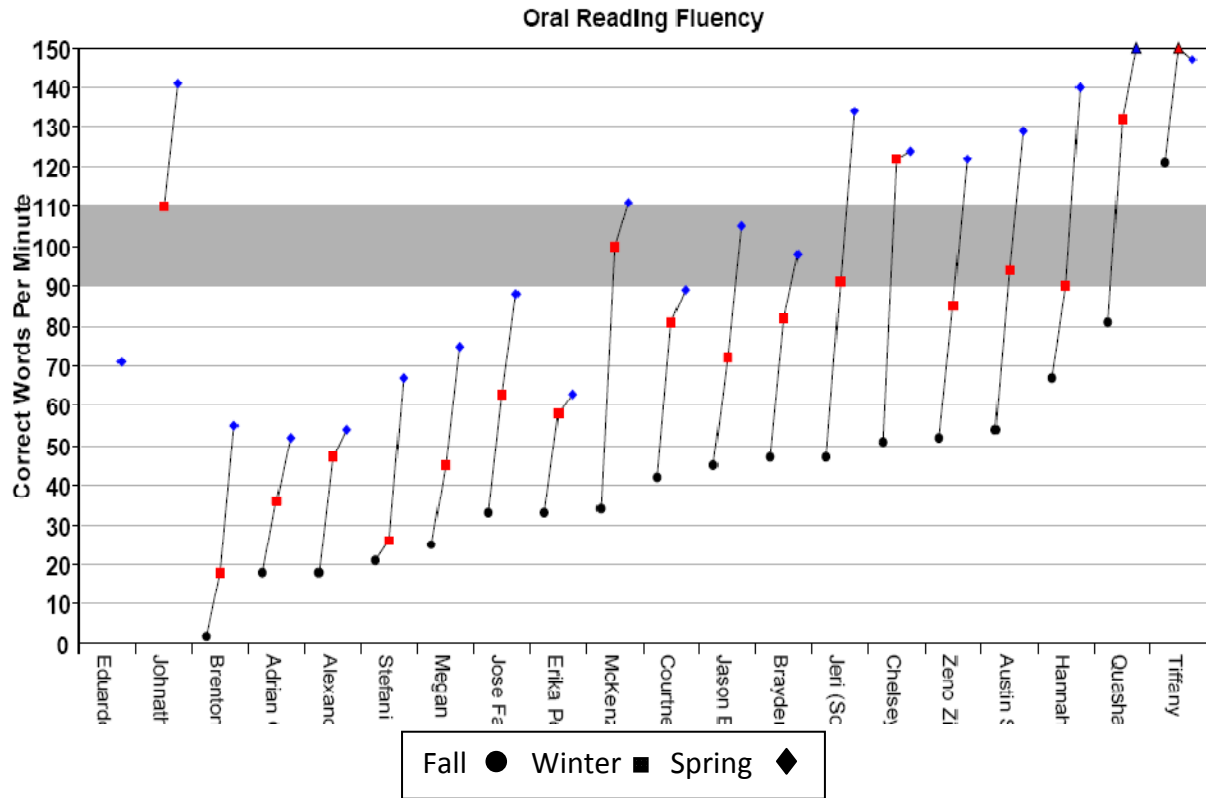


Figure 3

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Progress Monitoring Graphs

